

COUNTRY Germany (Soviet Zone)

TOPIC Herseburg Airfield

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DATE OF CONTENT 19 September to 5 October 1951

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 DATE PREPARED 26 November 1951

REFERENCES

PAGES 2 ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE) 2 sketches on ditto

REMARKS

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1. No change of occupation was observed at the barracks building of Herseburg airfield up to 19 September 1951. (1) On 21 September, 14 houses along Horststrasse were vacated by civilians who moved to town with their furniture. The houses were then occupied by Soviet officers.
2. About 500 laborers were working on the east and west ends of the runway and the western connecting lane. Some of the soldiers stationed at the field were replacing the old fence with a new board fence 2.5 meters high. Thus, the area occupied by Soviets was obstructed from sight. The destroyed building in the field area was completely removed. Lauchstaedter Strasse was torn up between the intersection with Gerichtsrain and the intersection with Fritz Ruter Strasse. The embanked road about 1 meter high was leveled. Trees and kilometer markers were removed in the extension toward Knapendorf. (2)
3. The landing field was heavily guarded. At 6 a.m. on 5 October, the southern section of the bunker near the presumed fuel dump had not been covered with earth and that four pipes projected from the concrete walls. Two meters from the wall, the pipes were bent sharply toward the target range which was southeast. The lid of a manhole about 0.5 x 4 meters was observed directly south of the target range. in the open section of the bunker that the four pipes were laid in N-S direction between six concrete columns which were placed opposite each other. Each pipe had a round lid fitted with screws. (3)
4. work at the field had made little progress during the preceding two weeks. The last strip of 100 meters of the west end of the runway was torn up, probably because of the elevated terrain there. The runway was extended by 100 meters at its eastern end about 150 meters from Lauchstaedter Strasse. The portion of the runway at the intersection with the taxiway was reinforced. Leveling continued at the west end of the runway.

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5. A construction foreman at the field said that a Soviet engineer, a general officer had, inspected the field on 21 September and that, thereupon, changes were performed on the runway.
6. The runway and taxiway were interconnected by four connecting lanes, two of which were close to each other at the east end of the runway. Another lane was about two-thirds from east end of both runway and taxiway. The fourth lane extended from the west end of the taxiway to the west end of the runway. (4) The width of the fourth lane was twice as wide as the other three lanes. It was 23.8 meters wide. About 150 meters west of the third lane there was the presumed underground fuel dump.
7. The lowest point of the drainage system on the northern edge of the runway was near the third connecting lane. There, power shovels were excavating a trench about 2.5 meters deep and 300 meters long. This was to direct the water to a brook to the northwest. Pipes about 1.5 meter in diameter were stored on the side of the trench. Another drainage trench was excavated just behind the fourth connecting lane. (5)

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Comments.

- (1) The barracks buildings have been occupied by 700 to 1,000 Soviet Air Force troops since September 1951. These soldiers are probably the advance detail of an air unit.
- (2) For location of destroyed building, torn-up strip of road and road to Knapendorf, see Annex 1.
- (3) For sketch of pipes laid under taxiway, see Annex 2. The installation is no fuel dump as presumed by source, but, according to another source, it is a gas line from Merseburg.
- (4) For location of connecting lanes, see Annex 1.
- (5) Most of the work on the runway and taxiway seems to be completed. It is believed possible that the field will soon be occupied by an air unit.

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